

# DEAR EDUCATOR

**DID YOU KNOW** that transportation accidents are the leading cause of death for children age 5 through 15? And that each year more than 3,000 children die and another 300,000 are injured in transportation-related incidents. Traveling is a big part of all children's school day. To get to school, they travel by car, bicycle, subway, bus, train, boat, and by foot.

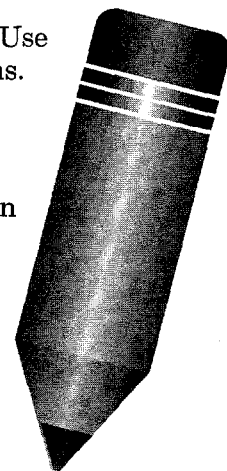
We realize your concern for each student's education goes beyond the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic and includes their safety in and out of school. We also realize schools have a tremendous impact in shaping kids' daily lives. We hope you and your colleagues will find the enclosed materials useful in creating lessons that will motivate your students to keep themselves, their friends and their relatives safe each time they travel.

## Here's how you can help:

- 1. MAKE STUDENTS AWARE.** Hang the enclosed poster on your classroom wall near the door to remind students of the safety steps each time they leave the classroom. Copy the four poster panels for students to read and color. Discuss the 10 safety steps with students. Encourage them to share their experiences when they follow or do not follow the steps. Discuss additional steps they would add to the list and why. Invite local speakers into the classroom to discuss the importance of following the safety steps. Speakers are available from a variety of community sources such as law enforcement officers, doctors, nurses, representatives from safety organizations, bus drivers, transportation workers, etc.
- 2. PROVIDE PARENTS WITH INFORMATION.** Share the information with the students' parents. They need to reinforce the importance of following each safety step and most importantly they need to follow them in order to be a good role model. Invite parents involved in transportation (truck driver, boating or biking enthusiast, transit operator, etc.) to speak to the class and demonstrate some of the safety steps.
- 3. ENCOURAGE STUDENT AND PARENT PLEDGES.** Unite the students and their parents as they pledge to follow the safety steps by signing the pledge card. Remind them when they sign the pledge card they are promising to follow the safety steps, and it is their responsibility to remind friends and relatives to keep safe each time they travel. To seal the pledge, place a safety sticker on each pledge card signed by both student and parent. To get additional stickers call (202) 366-2683.
- 4. KEEP THE ISSUES ALIVE.** Continue to reinforce the ideas and rules of traveling safely. Different times of the year are appropriate to emphasize certain safety steps. Use the information below to help you select what topics are appropriate for what seasons.

## Fall

As school begins, students should review the safety steps for each type of transportation they use to and from school. Each student should sign a pledge promising to follow the safety steps each time he or she travels. Be sure to get parental involvement by having each student get their parent to also sign the pledge sheet. With the end of daylight savings time and the celebration of Halloween, kids need to learn how to make themselves visible when traveling in the dark. Wearing light and bright colors is always a smart idea, but placing retroreflective tape on the back of their school bags, coats, hats, mittens, or shoes will really get the attention of drivers.



## Winter ❄️

With the holidays' arrival kids need to be reminded to travel smart and safely and that everyone in the car should always wear a safety belt. Children might want to make a New Year's resolution that can protect them and their loved ones - to follow and to make sure others follow the travel safety steps. Valentine's Day is a day to show your love for others. Reminding others to buckle up, look both ways before crossing the street, wear a bicycle helmet, and not play on train tracks are great ways to say "I love you." Bundling up against the cold weather always provides the opportunity to review the dangers of getting a scarf or long pants or coat caught in the steps of an escalator or the door or handrail of a bus.

## Spring 🌸

As the weather improves students will spend an increasing amount of their time outdoors. This is a good time to review the rules of pedestrian and bicycle safety. Emphasize that pedestrian safety steps need to be followed each time they walk or play outdoors, and a bicycle helmet must be properly secured and worn each time they ride. In many areas of the country, spring marks the beginning of boating season and that means life jackets need to be put into use. Children also need to be reminded to Stop, Look, and Listen each time they approach a railroad crossing and to never play on or near the tracks.

## Summer ☀️

Summer means vacations and outdoor fun. It also means kids traveling by many methods they do not usually use. They will be flying, boating, bicycle riding on and off-road, jetskiing, dirt bike riding, and more. Emphasis needs to be placed on the necessity of always following the safety steps - if they are just going around the corner or thousands of miles away. Most importantly, your students should leave the classroom thinking about how they can have fun and keep safe all summer long.

**5. CALL US FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND MATERIALS.** Identify the transportation safety topics relevant to your students and call the corresponding phone number listed below to order materials to use in your classroom. Materials including posters, brochures, flyers, video tapes, coloring books, and curricula are available. Many of these organizations have regional offices that could assist you. Check your local phone listings.

- Safety belts, child safety seats, bicycle and pedestrian safety, and school buses:  
*National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1-800-424-9393*
- Boating: *United States Coast Guard, 1-800-368-5647*
- Bicycle and pedestrian paths and facilities, road signs, and roadway construction:  
*Federal Highway Administration, 202-366-5007*
- Highway-rail grade crossings, trespassing on railroad tracks:  
*Federal Railroad Administration, 202-366-0881*
- Subways, commuter trains, or transit buses (not school buses):  
*Federal Transit Administration, 202-366-2896*
- Aviation: *Federal Aviation Administration, 1-800-322-7873*